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land use

By 2030, the Dallas/Fort Worth area is estimated to double its population. This growth will largely be distributed in the cities north of Dallas.

Population growth and land development can fuel economic expansion, revitalize commercial districts, and increase the tax

base. It can also cause traffic congestion, strain local resources, and impair quality of life. The growth strategy employed by the City of Farmers Branch can greatly influence which of these growth outcomes are realized.

For Farmers Branch, a “no growth” scenario is not a practical option. Sprawling development leapfrogs to the next city – congestion on our

streets continues to increase from development in surrounding cities with no economic benefits being realized in Farmers Branch.

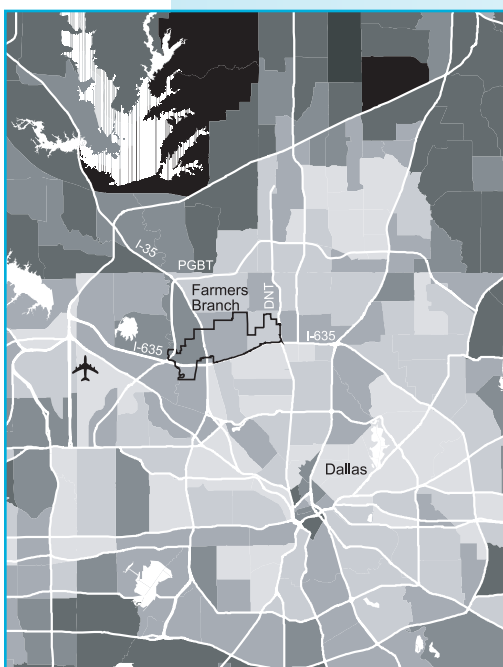
The fundamental question is “how to grow?” How can Farmers Branch capture the benefits of growth without congesting its streets or overcrowding its schools? How can the City maintain its character and charm while accommodating new residents and prospering economically? How can growth maintain and improve neighborhoods?

At a time when cities within the metroplex are grappling with sprawl, traffic congestion, and loss of identity, Farmers Branch has a choice whether to continue sprawl trends and the problems associated with them or embrace policies that enhance existing neighborhoods, encourage the building of complete neighborhoods, and strive to balance economic, environmental, and social resources and needs.

The central area of the City is largely built out. Most new development is likely to occur on the west and east sides of Farmers Branch. The possible directions the West Side could take are multiple, complex, and sometimes competing. The issues associated with growth and what it means in terms of quality of life are multi-faceted.

The North Central Texas Council of Government’s regional transportation plan highlights the likelihood that significant economic growth will occur on the West Side of Farmers Branch because of its proximity to the airport and the relatively large amount of contiguous undeveloped land available in the area with high visibility and accessibility from IH35E, IH635, and planned extension of President George Bush Turnpike in 2006. DART light rail service will provide another stimulus to the West Side.

The land use plan reflects the West Side’s future role as a significant employment center. The West Side represents an important opportunity to create an employment base – in response to the significant trend towards concentration of employment growth in the northern suburbs of the metroplex. The plan attempts to create integrated communities rather than large, single-use districts.



2030 Population Growth Rate Map: The darker tones indicates areas of greatest population increase between 2003 and 2030. The North Central Texas Council of Government forecasts new growth occurring largely in the northern cities of the Dallas/Fort Worth region.

1. Process

In 1997, a series of meetings and mobile workshops (visits to other cities and specific development projects) took place with the City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission. City staff prepared alternative development scenarios for the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council to consider at public meetings. Those scenarios served as a basis for the formulation of fundamental development policies that would subsequently be formalized with the adoption of the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Plan in 1999. This Plan further elaborates and refines development policies.

A. Development Scenarios

Four different land use scenarios for the West Side were analyzed to study the issues and consequences associated with growth, and to prompt discussion about ways to accommodate growth while maintaining the quality of life that today's residents, businesses and visitors value and enjoy.

All four scenarios shared a core fundamental assumption: environmentally sensitive land such as heavily wooded areas, wetlands, floodplains, and levee and sump areas will not be used for development purposes. The findings were presented at a public meeting.

1.) Scenario 1: Existing Comprehensive Plan

This scenario analyzed development build-out consistent with the 1989 Comprehensive Plan recommendations. The 1989 Plan recommends up to 9,000 multi-family residential units south of Valley View Lane. While residential development is desirable on the West Side, for areas in proximity to Royal Lane and Luna Road intersection residential development is not appropriate due to emergency response time thresholds. The

market, existing and proposed streets and infrastructure improvements are not likely to support the roughly 37 million square feet of office and 10 million square feet of retail development recommended by the Plan.

2.) Scenario 2: Existing Zoning

This scenario assumed the West Side developing consistent with then existing 1997 zoning regulations. New development would primarily take the form of suburban office parks. Residential development is not permitted anywhere except south of LBJ Freeway (IH635), east of Luna Road – the least desirable location on the entire West Side. The market, existing and proposed streets, and infrastructure improvements are not likely to support 21.6 million square feet of office and 680,000 square feet of retail development possible under 1997 zoning.

3.) Scenario 3: No Residential Development

This scenario assumed no residential development on the West Side. The market, existing and proposed streets and infrastructure improvements are not likely to support 20 million square feet of office and 3.2 million square feet of retail development proposed under this scenario.

4.) Scenario 4: With Residential Development

This scenario assumed the West Side developing with 14,000 multi-family residential units. The residential population, particularly school-age children, was the highest in this scenario. The market, existing and proposed streets, and infrastructure improvements are not likely to support 16.9 million square feet of office and 3.2 million square feet of retail development proposed under this scenario.

B. Development Policies

The four development scenarios were presented at public meetings and the following general policies were identified to guide future development on the West Side:

- The densities proposed in all the four scenarios were extremely high and likely not supportable by the market or infrastructure improvements;
- The cost of providing the necessary infrastructure to fully realize the value of the West Side has proven to be well in excess of that which can be sustained by private developers alone under any scenario. As a result, approximately 50% of the West Side is unimproved. Although national corporate relocation consultants continue to identify the LBJ Corridor as a premier corporate area, the principal reason for the absence of new development in the unimproved areas has been the lack of adequate infrastructure, i.e., providing traffic access, water, sewer, and drainage. An economic development tool to fund infrastructure improvement was found to be necessary;
- Limited residential development in a mixed-use setting was desirable; and
- The 1989 Comprehensive Plan and zoning documents would need to be amended to reflect the above stated points.

C. Tax Increment Financing Plan

A Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District known as Mercer Crossing was created in August 1999 as an economic development tool to fund necessary public infrastructure improvements. Based on the consensus of development policies achieved through the study of four development scenarios, a general preferred land use scenario was developed. An Economic Impact Analysis was prepared to assess what densities the market likely could sustain and to calculate the tax, employment, and economic impacts of the preferred development scenario.

The Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district includes approximately 808 acres of undeveloped land as shown in the map. Under the TIF program, the City of Farmers Branch, Dallas County, Dallas County Community College District, Dallas County Hospital District, the Valwood Improvement District, Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD, and the Dallas ISD have committed to contribute incremental increases in property tax revenues primarily resulting from new development in the district to finance public infrastructure needs within the TIF area. The public infrastructure improvements necessary to develop this TIF include streets, streetscape landscaping, water distribution, wastewater collection, and storm water drainage systems. Also included are drainage improvements, park facilities, hard surface trails, and land reclamation.

The general development policies served as the basis for the TIF plan. This plan shows how the West Side might develop if the focus were on creating balanced options of land uses. Two proposed mixed-use areas would focus new development in walkable centers that contain opportunities to live, work, shop, and play. The remaining area could be developed with office campuses and ancillary uses that serve as employment centers. This scenario focuses new development into land use patterns wherein mass transit, walking, and biking become more feasible.

2. Land Use

The Land Use chapter acknowledges how land is currently used and identifies how it should be used in the future. The West Side Land Use Plan has the following components:

- Description of existing use of land;
- Planning policies (goals and strategies indicating the City's preferred development pattern for growth);
- Land use projections; and
- Land use categories.

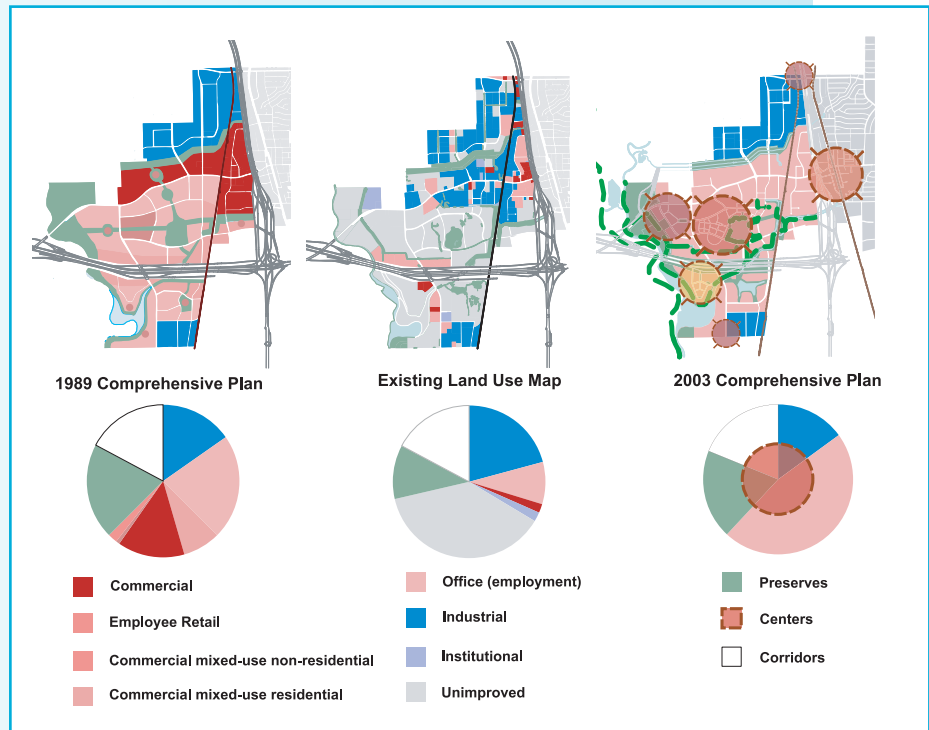
A. Existing Use of Land

An understanding of existing land use helps to put into perspective how the West Side has developed and how it may influence development in the future.

Since the annexation of the West Side in 1957, the interstate highway system and proximity to the airports have transformed the West Side from a farming and mining area into a bustling regional center of commerce and industry.

The land use survey for the West Side was conducted in August 2000. At that time, 49% of the West Side was undeveloped. The West Side has a strong industrial base. Industrial land uses amount to 20.9% of the developed land on the West Side. Industrial development on the West Side is largely concentrated in two areas: the Valwood Industrial Park north of Cooks Creek and a mix of industrial uses located south of LBJ Freeway (IH635), on the east side of Luna Road. The Valwood Industrial District sub-market (which includes the industrial park in

Farmers Branch and Carrollton) houses 19.9 million square feet of warehouse/distribution space. Office development (at 8.8%) is largely situated along LBJ Freeway (IH635) or along the major thoroughfares of Luna Road and Valley View Lane. Commercial uses, which comprise 2.1% of total land uses, are situated almost exclusively along the IH35E Corridor.



B. Planning Policies

The TIF plan spells out general land use policies for approximately 808 acres of undeveloped land on the West Side. The policies specified in this section build on the TIF Plan and define in greater detail the land use policies for the entire West Side.

The visual preference tool was employed to inform people of the different choices and involve the community in making informed choices about the entire West Side area.

Visual Preference

The West Side land use plan is the foundation of zoning and development policies. Generally, land use section plans use words and phrases that may have multiple interpretations depending upon the experience or understanding of the reader. For the land use plan to be effective, it must represent a clear vision of the future appearance and character of the West Side. To encourage wider public participation and to measure public reaction to varying kinds of development and growth patterns, a visualization process was employed.

The underlying premise of this exercise is that credible plans cannot be created without seeing or understanding the vision. The Visual Preference exercise helped visualize the choices associated with words like mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, and sprawl. Participants reviewed and commented on a series of images and provided viewpoints on what they liked or disliked about the images.

The purpose of the exercise was to visually summarize impressions of the present community and to build consensus for its future character. The images that best represent the vision were incorporated into this Land Use section. These images explicitly illustrate what the language of the Land Use section specifies. Potential developers can use the results to understand what the community wants. The City will have a logical basis, an immediately comprehensible, illustrated reference document, for the development review process.

The following goals and strategies were developed from:

- Extensive public discussions held before advisory and decision-making boards;
- Focus group meetings with existing businesses to address specific issues on the West Side;
- A survey of property owners within the existing industrial park;
- Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council mobile workshops to innovative projects in the greater Dallas area; and
- Input through the visual preference exercise.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

The City can rely on three powerful tools for shaping growth on the West Side:

- Regulatory tools;
- Public Infrastructure investments; and
- Public-private partnerships.

Regulatory tools (such as zoning and subdivision ordinances) define the urban form – tools that define the type and intensity of new development and prescribe design and development standards to achieve the West Side's sense of place goals.

Public infrastructure improvements on the West Side will be funded through the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. Infrastructure improvements such as access to public facilities, and transit, water, sewer, and utility lines improve the development potential of the West Side and make it more attractive to private investments.

A public-private partnership involves using public funds or activities to directly foster private investment and development activity that can benefit the entire community, and that otherwise would not occur. By using public investments strategically the City can reinforce and guide the growth concept and stimulate interest and leverage investment from the private sector.

Goals

1. Development in the form of interconnected employment districts, and compact centers, and a diverse mix of activities (residences, shops, workplaces and parks, etc) located to minimize the use of the automobile.
2. Stable and enduring economic base.
3. Cohesive urban design that builds civic pride and enhances community identity.

Strategies

Strategies for Urban Form (also refer to Sense of Place section)

While making decisions on establishing regulatory tools, reviewing development applications, funding public infrastructure improvements, and entering into public-private partnerships, the City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, and staff will consider if the proposed action is consistent with the following criteria:

1. Promote walkable neighborhoods and employment districts -- encourage new and existing developments to include mix of uses with a pedestrian-friendly design.
2. Encourage neighborhood centers to include public spaces, facilities, and transit to accommodate more intense commercial and residential development.
3. Provide an accessible and integrated open space system.
4. Preserve distinctive development character by encouraging diversity in design, development type, respecting the natural landform, and creating community landmarks.
5. Promote safety through pedestrian-friendly street design, traffic calming, and crime prevention.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

The current zoning code originated in 1969 and has been revised extensively since then. As the community's expectations for development changed, so did the code, and it has evolved to include many new districts that are highly specialized.

Currently the zoning code tends to rely heavily on regulating uses. The basic premise of this approach is that the appearance of the building, its compatibility with the surrounding properties, and its impact to the community are closely related to and can be defined by the use within the building. However, it is much easier to directly regulate impact or appearance than to expect it to happen indirectly through detailed regulations of uses. The intent of the revised code will be to give equal attention to the land use, development standards, and design aspects of the code.

Planned Development District involves a negotiated development plan between a developer and the City of Farmers Branch. Concerns with Planned Development Districts are that their widespread proliferation has increased the complexity of regulating land uses.

The revised zoning code will consist of standardized land uses, as well as development and design standards available for use in multiple zone districts.

Revisions will make the zoning code easier to use, more predictable and much more effective in creating the kind of environment envisioned by the West Side Plan.

a sound fiscal base.

3. Initiate discussions with school district to assess if Triple Freeport can be offered.

Strategies for Infrastructure/Public Facilities (also refer to Infrastructure and Public Facilities sections)

1. Facilitate patterns of development that can be served by adequate infrastructure.

Strategies for Mobility (also refer to Circulation section)

1. Coordinate land use and transportation planning to improve mobility.
2. Expand mobility options through walkable neighborhoods, housing/employment links, an attractive trail system, and transit use.

Strategies for Governance and Service Delivery

1. Coordinated City policies will integrate separate real estate development projects to create authentic memorable places.
2. The City will continue to develop innovative and new approaches to the use of regulatory structures and community-based initiatives. For example: info-centers (see Public Facilities section) would bring access to City services within neighborhoods.
3. Zone properties in accordance with the adopted land use map would promote orderly development.
4. Currently, 12 Planned Development Districts regulate development on the West Side. The City will prepare revisions to the city-wide Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance by replacing specific Planned Development Districts with city-wide zoning districts.

Strategies for Economic Prosperity (also refer to Economic Profile section)

1. Maintain and increase the existing supply of land zoned for employment uses and revitalize underutilized land for employment use.
2. Enhance existing infrastructure to accommodate employment growth and provide

C. Land Use Projections

The land use map for the West Side reflects the area's context and the goals and strategies adopted to guide development. The land use plan describes a Farmers Branch community that supports an ultimate employment base of approximately 45,800 jobs and 5,000 residential units.

The land use plan is intended to be flexible, because it is not possible to predict precisely

The building blocks of the city are districts, centers, corridors, and preserves.

the market demand or absorption of land over 10 to 20 years. As a result, the mix of recommended

uses should remain somewhat flexible. What are most important to establish now are the general character, scale, and density of the mixed-use community and its employment districts, as well as the basic infrastructure, open space, and other elements of the public realm.

Site specific land uses, parcel configuration, and relationships among various forms of employment, retail, housing and other uses should be determined more definitely as development and the process of zoning and platting proceeds.

The land use map identifies land use allocations and it estimates anticipated employment and residential population totals for projected buildout of the West Side. Some of the employment parameters will vary over time, but the land use plan provides a feasible baseline, consistent with current and anticipated market conditions.

The land use plan assigns 55% of the West Side to development and 25% to a mix of open space uses (storm water management, parks, trails, and natural areas). Approximately 20% of the West Side will be required for streets.

		Employment	Residents
Non-residential			
Existing Development (Industrial, Office, Commercial)		15,000	
Future Development			
Office	6 million s.f.	30,000	
Retail	190,000 s.f.	400	
Hotel	1,250 rooms.	300	
Residential			
Urban Multi-family	5,000 units	100	7,000
Total		45,800	7,000

The development intensity is based on the 20-year tax, employment, and economic impact analysis prepared for the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district.

D. Land Use Plan

Districts: Districts are areas that are dominated by a single primary activity.

Districts may be mixed-use but are typically dominated by a single primary land use such as office, or residential development.

Centers: Centers are the local or regional destinations at the neighborhood or city scale.

Centers are by definition mixed-use areas - they include jobs, service, and retail as well as housing in some centers.

Preserves: Preserves are the open space element such as storm water management, parks, trails, and natural areas that frame the city.

Corridors: These are the connecting elements typically linear in configuration and include the natural systems, and infrastructure and transportation lines.

Corridors come in many forms from roads and highways to rail lines and trails, from utility easements to creeks and rivers.

1.) Districts

The district boundaries contain an area with a generally consistent character in land use mix, physical design, and transportation characteristics.

Farmers Branch has three distinctive land use districts: industrial, employment, and residential districts. The West Side of the City includes two of three districts: the industrial and employment districts.

Each district is intended to support a mix of uses. The specific mix of uses depends on the location, size, and site characteristics. The districts vary from providing diversity to instances where one or more uses predominate. The districts have defined edges and an identifiable center. The edges can be natural or man-made. Open spaces, drainage corridors, high volume roadways or low density residential neighborhoods can all serve as edges.

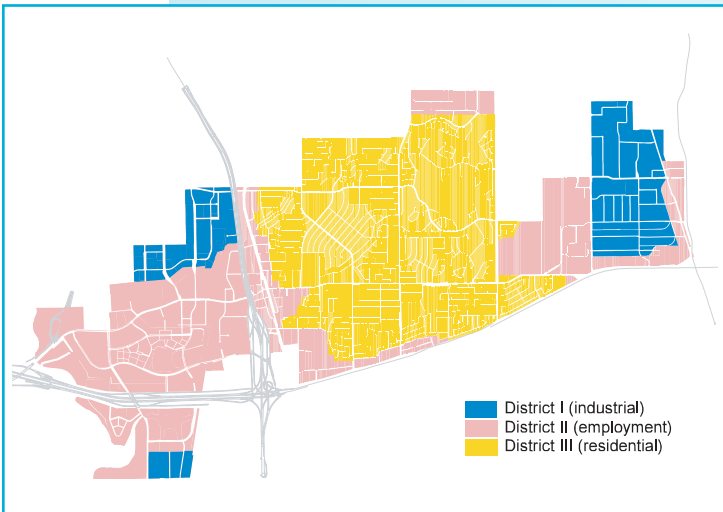
2.) Centers

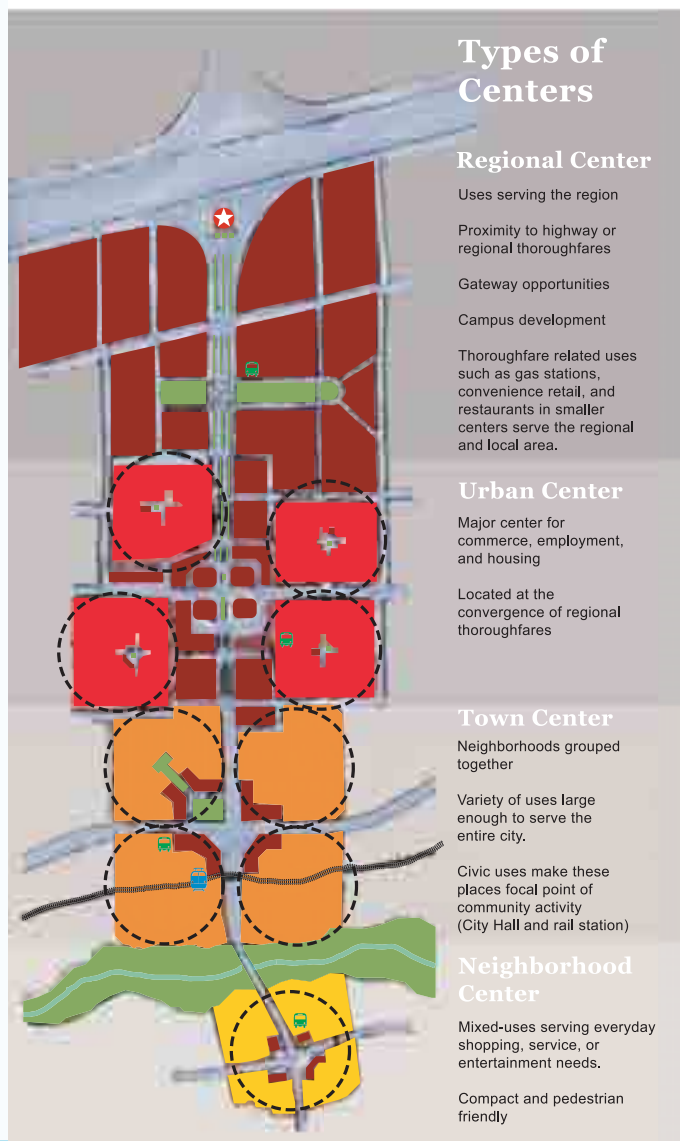
Each district includes a center. A center is the focal point of one or more neighborhoods.

The size of a center and its role in the city generally correspond with the scale and accessibility of the surrounding neighborhoods. Some centers are modest in size and local in function, such as the neighborhood center which primarily serves the nearby population. Others are large in scale, such as the town and regional centers incorporating a greater mix of uses intended to serve a larger population.

Centers are the focal points and destinations within Farmers Branch. The center areas are places where a greater range of uses is expected and encouraged.

The district and center should work together to establish identity and promote a sense of place.





the convenience and synergy needed for a healthy center.

(3.) Mobility: Centers should be accessible and accommodating to the automobile, but not at the cost of ruling out walking. Well connected sidewalks, minimal curb cuts, and shade will help promote walking, transit, and cycling. Transit stops should be integrated with the centers.

(4.) Public Space: The character of a space is determined by its public places. Generally, the center should include a plaza, square, or green located in a prominent position framed by buildings that open towards the space -- these spaces vary in size and can take on different geometries.

(5.) Layout: The physical plan of the center must incorporate basic site design techniques to establish a balance between traffic circulation, retail planning logic, loading, maintenance, control of noise or other conflicts between uses, phasing, architectural continuity, privacy, security, and flexibility for change.

The block and lot pattern derives naturally from a connected street network. The block and lot pattern permits unified street design, in which the transitions between

incompatible uses or building types occur across the rear or side property lines.

a.) Guiding Principles for Centers

(1.) Scale: The center must be scaled for the pedestrian. Highways and oversized parking lots should not dominate the scene at the heart of the community. Buildings should be positioned so that they help shape the spaces of streets and plazas, and where they help screen the service and parking areas.

(2.) Use: A mix of stores, restaurants, dwellings, offices, and civic uses generates

Centers should be laid out with a secondary network of alleys that crosses the blocks. Alleys provide basic transportation and utility access. Alleys allow trash trucks and large delivery vehicles to perform necessary functions without hampering traffic on city streets. From a utility perspective, alleys provide adequate space to locate under

ground wet and dry utilities and storm water facilities. The use of alleys also reduces curb cuts along the block fronts in centers, thereby preserving sidewalk continuity and creating a more pedestrian friendly environment. Alleys are particularly useful in providing additional separation where they coincide with a transition between residential and mixed-use buildings.

(6.) Building Types: The low-slung, blank-walled boxes of conventional commercial development oriented only to parking lots does not promote a sense of place. Building types in the center should be street-oriented, with doors and windows facing the streets.

Certain necessary functions such as parking structures and large-footprint buildings are limited to the extent to which the doors and windows can face all streets. The requirements for small blocks, facades with doors and windows, do not inherently prevent a big box store. These goals do mean that the store must be adapted in ways that deviate from the typical chain-store prototypes. The easiest way to accommodate the required bulk of the big box retailer is to place the store on two or more levels and divide its parking so that fewer of the spaces are in front of the store - this has demonstratively worked for numerous retailers and stores located in downtowns. These large footprint buildings can also be surrounded with other uses (liner building with wrap-around shopfronts lining larger big boxes or parking structure) so as to screen their inhospitable sides from the streets. Another solution can be to position the large store with its primary entrance at the corner, with the rest of its footprint embedded within a building that incorporates an outer layer of shopfronts with doors and windows facing the street.

Retail Planning Logic:

Success & vitality of retail uses are a vital part of a memorable place. A few key guidelines include:

- Maintaining clear views to signage & merchandise;
- Incorporating on-street parking;
- Providing wide sidewalks; &
- Arranging retail tenants for synergy.



Parking garages can be surrounded with other uses (liner building with wrap-around shopfronts) so as to screen their inhospitable sides from the streets.



The large store can also be positioned with its primary entrance at the corner, with the rest of its footprint embedded within a building that incorporates an outer layer of shopfronts with doors and windows facing the street.

3.) Preserves

The districts and centers on the West Side will have access to a wide variety of high quality open spaces.

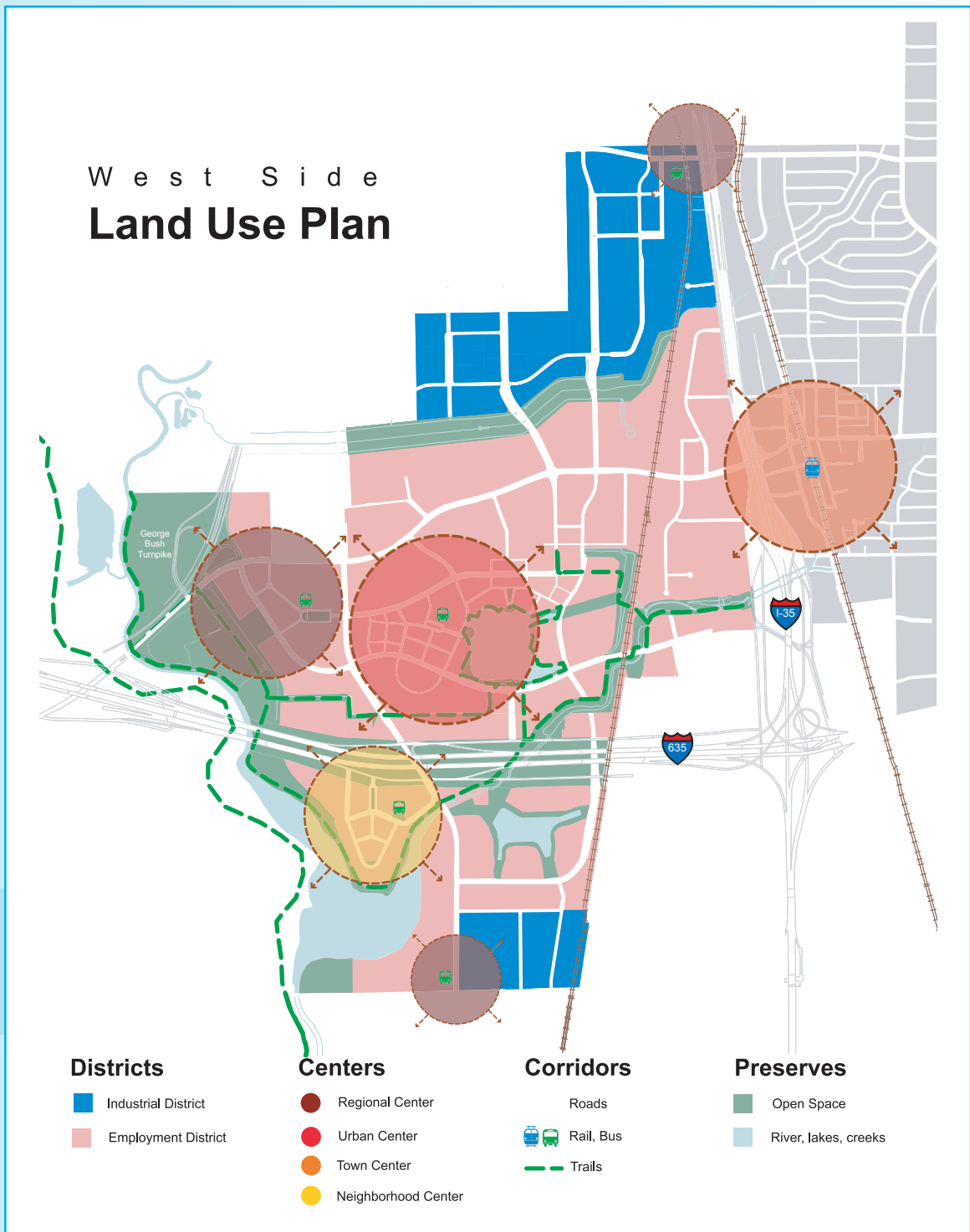
For a complete discussion on open spaces refer to the Open Space section of the Plan.

4.) Corridors

The natural corridors such as trails and water bodies are discussed in the Open Space section. All other corridors including network of roads and sidewalks, light rail, and busways are discussed in the Circulation section of the Plan.



5.) Land Use Plan Map



What is the purpose of the Land Use Plan Map?

The Plan Map identifies a desirable land use pattern for the West Side from today's perspective. The Land Use Plan does not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries. The Plan Map is not "parcel specific", rather a vocabulary of flexible building blocks that define the ideal future land use pattern on the West Side. The land use building blocks include districts, centers, corridors, and preserves.

The Land Use Plan Map will guide public decisions which affect the future physical development and maintenance of the West Side. For example, the plan should be used as a basis for:

- Evaluating zoning, site plan, and subdivision requests;
- Preparation of zoning regulations;
- Development of detailed physical plans for the area;
- The location and design of streets, and implementation of other transportation facilities and programs;
- Identification of areas to be served with utility development or extensions; and
- The acquisition and development of major open space.

The Plan is also dynamic and should be reviewed regularly and amended to reflect changes in City policies, programs, and priorities.

E. Descriptions of Districts and Centers

The West Side includes two Districts: the industrial and employment districts. Six centers will serve the West Side. The maps, text, photographs, and concept sketches communicate the intent and character of each district and center.

1.) Industrial District

Primary employment area

Larger flexible sites

Highway and rail access

Key Elements

Predominantly employment **land uses** including light manufacturing, assembly, distribution, office, and research and development within a park-like setting.

Center serves employees and thoroughfare related traffic.

Density of 0.3 FAR. One to three story structures with surface parking.

President George Bush Turnpike exits at Valley View Lane and Valwood Parkway will increase **accessibility** to the area.

The existing landscaped front yards and drainage corridors enhance the **park-like** setting.

The West Side comprises of two Industrial District areas: Valwood Industrial Park and the business park located at the northeast corner of Luna Road and Royal Lane.

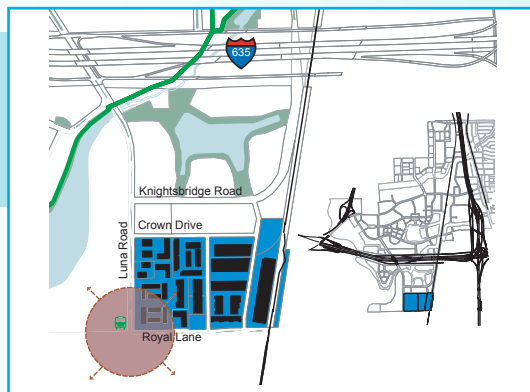
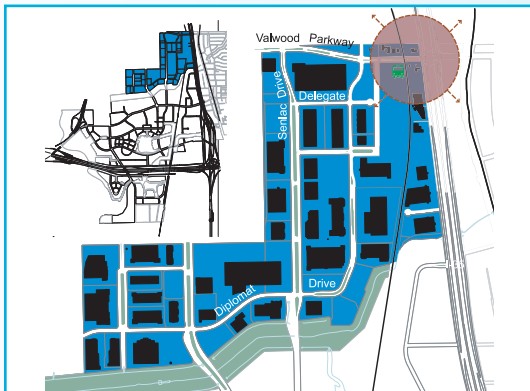
The industrial park areas provides great access and flexibility for truck and rail service.

Visibility from highways and entrance features.

The Industrial District accommodates a wide variety of employment related uses.

Future regional centers at Royal Lane and Luna Road, and Valwood Parkway and IH35E will become a focal points for their respective districts.

The goal is to create successful environments for many forms of business activity, while keeping the area transit accessible, respectful of the park-like setting, and completely integrated with the adjacent employment district of the West Side.



Valwood Industrial Park Focus Group

Valwood Industrial Park (VIP) is the largest industrial park located on the West Side of Farmers Branch. The City hosted a focus group meeting with area realtors in June 2002 to discuss the future of the VIP. Following are notes from that meeting:



Desirable Features

Location: The VIP is well located for nationwide distribution center with easy access from IH35E (NAFTA Corridor), IH635, and President George Bush Turnpike.

Flexibility: The area offers a healthy mix of small and big-box uses. Multi-tenant is a trend for reuse of large vacant warehouse buildings.

Appearance: The mature landscaping is striking.

Crime: VIP is a safe area.

Perceived Negative

Lack of Triple Freeport: Freeport property is exempt from property tax for various types of goods that are detained in Texas for 175 days or less. This exemption has to be approved by Carrollton/Farmers Branch Independent School District.

The inability to offer Triple Freeport detracts distribution facilities with a large inventory of eligible goods.

Aging Industrial Park: Roadway segments in some places need repair. Some exterior facades may need improvement.

Valwood Improvement Tax: All properties within the VIP are assessed an additional tax.

Lack of Amenities: Employees within the VIP have expressed the need for restaurants and access to open space.

Lack of Large Sites: Lack of any large remaining parcels restricts ability to attract corporate relocations.

Strategies

Initiate discussions with school district to assess if Triple Freeport can be offered.

Institute a façade and street improvement program.

Explore entry signage and landscaping to give VIP higher visibility along the major highways and thoroughfares.

Enhance access to existing retail, restaurants, and open spaces, and attract new convenience retail and restaurant to the VIP area.

Similar meetings such as the Valwood Industrial Park Focus Group meeting should continue to occur in the future to keep the Plan dynamic and assist in the implementation of the West Side Plan.

a.) Guiding Principles for Industrial District

The streetscape image should be of building sites on open landscaped lawns. Streetscape planting should be informal and allow for sight lines to view the main façade of the building, while screening parking areas, loading areas etc. from the street.

Parking, located between the streets and building front should be limited to visitor parking. Parking is preferred to be located along the side of properties. The remaining parking requirements and the service areas for the buildings should be located to the sides and rear of the buildings and be screened from street view.

Signage, including corporate, tenant, and traffic signage, should be coordinated on each property.

Outside storage and roof top equipment should not be visible from the street.



Windows, enhanced entry points, landscaping, change in colors and materials add scale and interest to the building.

Building masses should respond to a "human scale" with materials and details that are proportionate to human height and provide visual interest at the street and sidewalk level.

Individual parcels within larger projects should be integrated with adjacent properties and provide convenient access to transit stops and, where feasible, to the regional trail system.

An industrial/business park is a planned, designed, constructed, and managed on an integrated and coordinated basis with special attention given to on-site vehicular circulation, parking, utility needs, building design, orientation, and open space.



Parking areas in front of the building should be screened from street by landscaping.



Landscaping is needed within each building site to:

- Enhance the aesthetic of the industrial park;
- Create a pedestrian friendly area;
- Break-up the mass of industrial buildings;
- Soften architectural materials;
- Provide screening of service structures, and parking and loading areas;
- Enhance the streetscape/parkway environment;
- Define building and parking area entrances;
- Provide shade and climate control; and
- Reduce and filter drainage and storm water runoff from paved surfaces.

Drought tolerant plant species that are native to the region or suitable to the climate should be used.

b.) Centers



In the Industrial District, on the West Side, two regional centers are located along heavy automobile traffic intersections which is desirable for retail and restaurants. These centers are also gateway sites to Farmers Branch. Besides the employees in the area, the convenience retail and restaurants at these centers would largely cater to the traveling public, both automobile and truck traffic (e.g. gas stations, restaurants, retail, and hotels).

During focus group meetings lack of nearby amenities was expressed by businesses within the Valwood Industrial Park.



Presently, the area around the intersection at Valwood Parkway and IH35E serves automobile oriented thoroughfare needs such as gas station and automobile repair and oil change facilities. This intersection should also serve the convenience retail and restaurants needs of the Valwood Industrial Park area.

The proposed Valwood Parkway exit on the President George Bush Turnpike would bring further traffic and increase the market for retail and restaurant uses on Valwood Parkway.

The approved concept plan for office buildings west of Luna Road proposes retail at the northwest corner of Royal Lane and Luna Road.



The main facades could incorporate architectural elements such as columns, arches, arcades, overhangs, awnings, landscaping, and pedestrian amenities which create a better human scale.

Freestanding buildings such as gas stations, fast food establishments, and banks are viewed from all sides, therefore attention to detail should be incorporated into all visible facades.



Unified architectural design should be incorporated into each commercial center. The design of freestanding pad buildings should be compatible with the design of the remainder of the shopping center.

Freestanding buildings, particularly those located at thoroughfare intersections should be integrated with the adjacent sites.

Changes in the height of the building (for example: entry towers) are encouraged to add variety to the building and reduce the scale of a large building.

City Gateways:



The visual identity of the City is a collection of images, most often seen from a moving vehicle. People are most attracted to places with a sense of approach, arrival, and departure.

Vehicular entry points to the City are generally where the commercial uses are also found. An opportunity exists on the West Side to strengthen the image of the city by using the major vehicular entry points as gateways to the city. The IH35E service road corridor, even though it is not a pedestrian oriented street, communicates important information about the City, such as whether it is well maintained or neglected, contemporary or historic. Signs and artwork can direct passersby into destinations within the City.

2.) Employment District

Primary employment area.

**Urban mixed-uses
residences in two centers.**

Key Elements

Predominantly employment **land uses** with high quality office and research and development uses. Mixed-use residential development in two centers.

Variety of **Centers** from the village to the regional scale.

Density of 35 to 100 units per acre for residential and 0.3 to 1 FAR for employment uses. Higher end of the density range for employment and residential uses should be located in the centers.

Transit and trail **connections** between the centers.

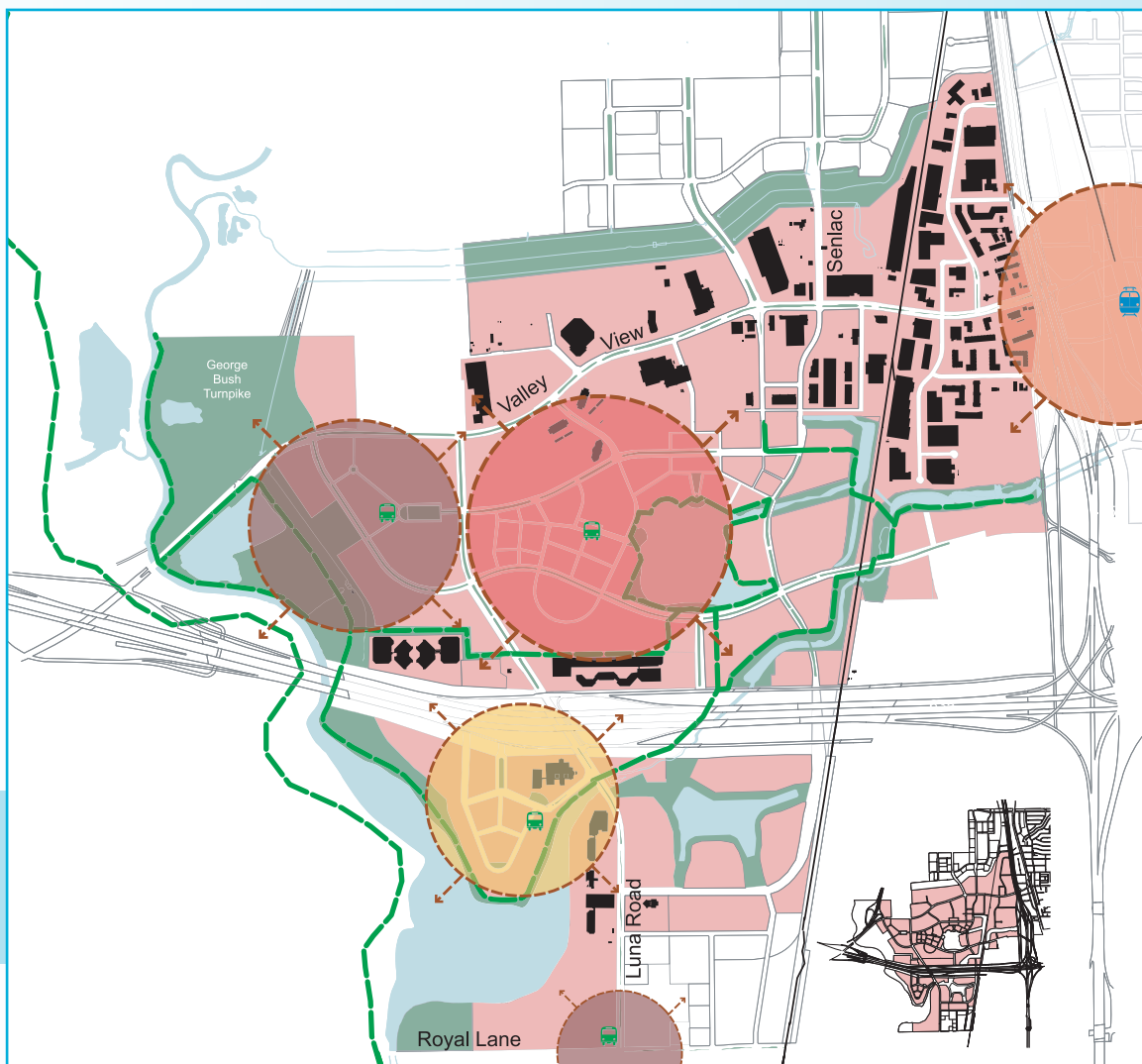
Varying scales of **open spaces**.

Elementary **school** site

This area has the greatest capacity to accommodate employment activity, particularly larger footprint buildings.

Residential development will be integrated into two compact mixed used centers.

The goal is to create a successful environment for many forms of business and retail activity, while keeping the district walkable, transit accessible, respectful to the natural environment, and completely integrated with the elements of the mixed-use centers.



a.) Guiding Principles for Employment District

Within larger blocks of employment use, pedestrian/bicycle pathways should be provided to increase accessibility within the block and adjacent areas within the District.

The Employment District shall be the primary location for employment within West Side. Office, retail, commercial, recreational and civic uses should be provided to maximize the potential for employees to take care of daily errands within the District, thereby reducing midday traffic.

Building placement and massing within the district should relate to the urban context of buildings within the centers.

Greens and plazas may be used to create a prominent civic component within the development. Buildings should reinforce and energize streets and public spaces, by providing a variety of entries, windows, bays, and balconies along public ways.

Additional storm water management systems will be needed for development within this District. The existing sumps, creeks, and lakes shall be protected and accentuated through sensitive site planning, building placement, and other measures. New storm water detention or retention facilities should be connected to the existing sump system, and to the extent practicable, form a connected, coordinated and comprehensive open space system that may be used for passive or active recreation.

Mixed-use centers within the District should be considered major stops on the local transit network. Associated transit stop facilities should be integrated into the design of the centers, centrally located, and easily accessible for pedestrians walking to and from the surrounding employment areas.



Drainage basins devoid of any ecological or aesthetic relationship to the site.

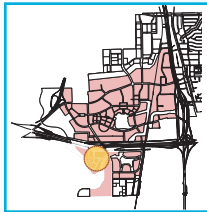


Recommendation: Drainage basin can have terraced or gently sloped sides and be planted with wet tolerant vegetation.



Employment District is the largest district on the West Side.

This District has a variety of centers ranging from a neighborhood center to region serving centers.



b.) Centers

(1.) Neighborhood Center

The neighborhood center will accommodate 1.8 million square feet of office and up to 1,200 residential units.

Different scales of open spaces will be provided in this urban village: a village plaza will create a prominent civic component to the core area; neighborhood open spaces will provide modest and flexible recreational opportunities; and a perimeter trail system along the lake will provide connections to the Trinity Trail systems, other centers on the West Side, and the central area of Farmers Branch.



Aerial photograph of the peninsula parcel located south of IH635 and west of Luna Road.



The urban mixed-use residential uses would be along the river with an employment core in the middle.

Riverfront Elevation



Neighborhood Plaza

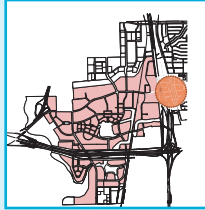
(2.) Town Center

The town center is larger and more varied than the neighborhood center. Public uses such as City Hall, train station, and civic plazas forward the strong civic presence in this center.

The proposed Farmers Branch light rail station will be located in the town center, east of IH35E -- the train station, city hall, and other related mixed-used developments will give Farmers Branch its long anticipated town center.

The development of the station area, particularly the gateway sites would benefit the intersection west of IH35E.

The station area will be connected to the West Side through trails and transit feeder connections to the Station.



One of the three illustrative options developed based on guiding principles



The station area vision is a product of a series of public meetings and workshops that took place in 2001-02.



IH35E and Valley View Lane intersection.



Concept sketch for gateway project on the east side of IH35E.



Concept sketch for retail in the Station Area along Valley View Lane.



Sketch of station area.

Guiding Principles for Town Center and Urban Center

Mixed-use Development

- Provide a variety and intensity of land uses, including retail, restaurant, professional services, office and residential within walking distance of the station facility.

Strong Connections

- Improve transit accessibility and promotes its use;
- Emphasize walking over automobile use;
- Link uses and activities;
- Incorporate pedestrian amenities and multi-modal connections;
- Provide visual connections to the transit station; and
- Provide links to Trinity River as well as other neighborhoods.

Main Street Development

- Encourage street activity and walking;
- Maximize visibility for retail; and
- Make pedestrian areas more interesting.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Environment

- Include sidewalk, trails, trees, benches, and active public open space; and
- Make biking easy, efficient, and safe.

On-street Parking

- Reduce the need for large parking lots; and
- Provide convenient parking to support retail and restaurants.

Structured Parking

- Decrease the amount of land required for parking; and
- Make parking convenient and closer to the building.

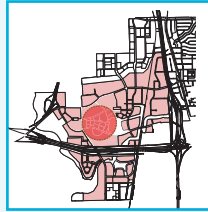
(3.) Urban Center

The urban center, like the neighborhood and town centers, must be mixed-use, walkable, and transit served. It serves the region, but is more compact and dense than a regional center and does not have the same level of civic uses found in the town center.

The urban center consists of job-generating and high intensity uses such as offices, community serving retail, and high density housing. Second floor office and residential uses add to the intensity and walkability of the area, and the restaurants maintain its night life.

Segments of Luna Road and Mercer Parkway that frame the urban center should be designed as boulevards: a central roadway for fast moving through traffic with access lanes on either sides for local traffic. Multiway boulevards provide for mobility along with the landscaping and pedestrian serving opportunities.

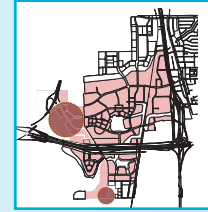
A transitional area proposed around the urban center will ensure that building placement and building massing around the urban center relate to the urban context of buildings within the center.



(4.) Regional Center

Regional centers are less compact and dense than urban centers. They are employment and community serving retail centers. Regional centers are located along regional thoroughfares or along interstate exits.

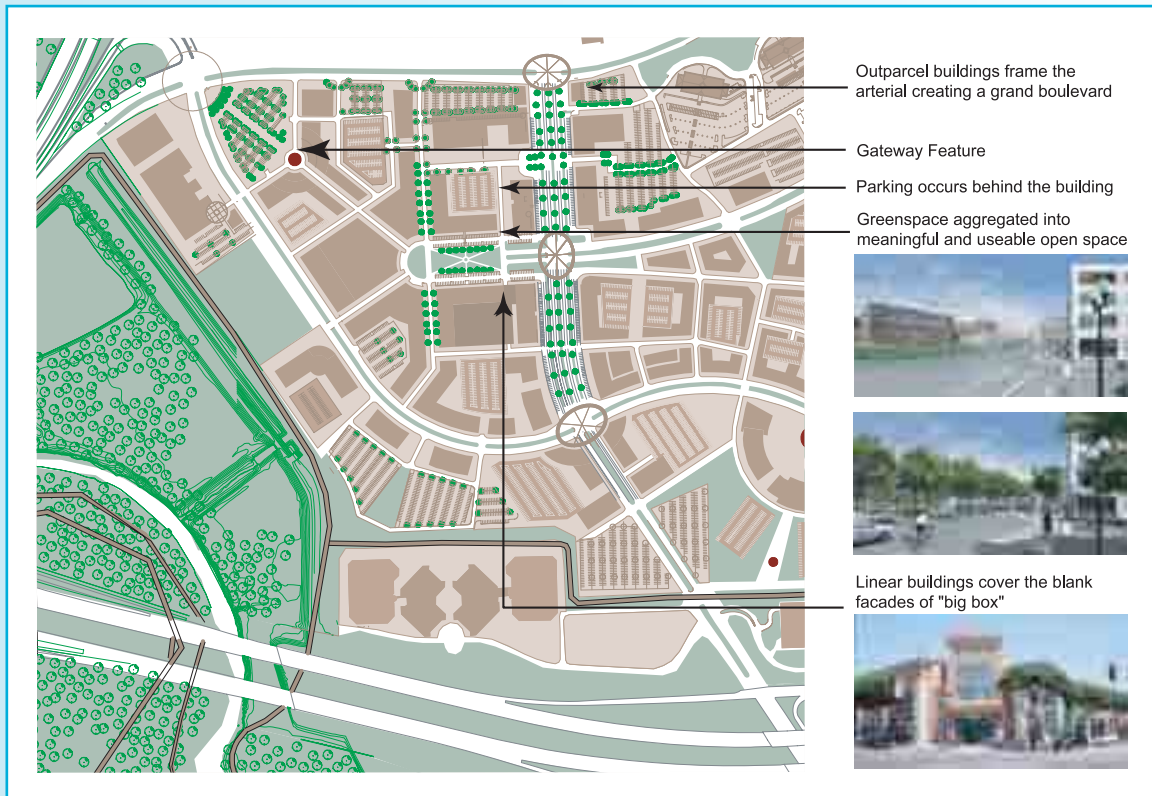
The Employment District will be served by two regional centers. The center located at the intersection of Royal Lane and Luna Road will also serve the business park located in the Industrial District. For more discussion on this center see Industrial District.



Site amenities, benches and planters that enhance the pedestrian areas located in front of stores are encouraged.



Concept sketch represents one of the several options available for laying out streets, open space, and buildings.



Concept sketch represents one of the several options available for laying out streets, open space, and buildings.

It is often extremely difficult to make adequate provisions for pedestrians. Yet this must be done because pedestrians are the lifeblood of our urban areas, especially in the the downtown and retail areas. In general, the most sucessful shopping sections are those that provide the most comfort and pleasure for pedestrians.

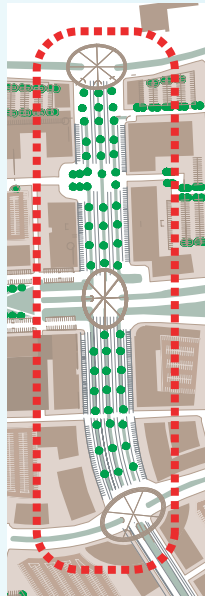
---- A Policy on Geometric Design of Streets and Highways, 2001, AASHTO

Two mixed-use centers converge at Luna Road, between Valley View Lane and IH635. Luna Road gets over 17,000 trips, daily. The trips are likely to increase in future once the West Side area is fully developed and President George Bush Turnpike is open.

Successful retail stores depend on high volume of trips. The wide arterials work well for moving cars; however, they are often bad for retail businesses that rely on foot traffic. They create little or no public space, often times are uncomfortable or unsafe for pedestrians, particularly the elderly and very young, and because they do not attempt to buffer the effects of traffic, they often are noisy and visually unappealing.

Multiple roadway boulevard provides for all uses of the street: access to property, through and local traffic, crossing movements, pedestrian and motorist activity, and public transit in a balanced way. For discussion on multiple roadway boulevard see Circulation section.

Images to the right suggest incremental changes that could transform Luna Road into a memorable boulevard without impacting its trip carrying capacity. Luna Road can become a civic amenity that becomes a place to drive to, not just drive through.



Conceptual transformation of Luna Road into a multiple roadway boulevard



Presently, Luna Road is a 100 feet wide six-lane divided arterial.



Sidewalks and additional trees added in the median.



Local traffic is separated from through traffic by a landscaped median.



Buildings are placed close to the street make sidewalks comfortable and interesting to walk along.